

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **PLYMBRIDGE NURSERY SCHOOL**

Plymouth

LEA area: Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113052

Headteacher: Lynda Chapman

Reporting inspector: Lorna Brackstone  
21872

Dates of inspection: 25 – 26 June 2001

Inspection number: 198778

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 5 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Miller Way Estover Plymouth
Postcode:	PL6 8UN
Telephone number:	01752 786444
Fax number:	01752 793495
E-mail address:	plymbridge.nursery@plymouth.gov.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane Hamlyn
Date of previous inspection:	25 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Area of learning responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21872	Lorna Brackstone	Registered inspector	Personal, social and emotional development Communication, language and literacy Physical development Creative development	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements
11096	Margaret Davie	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
20097	John Griffiths	Team inspector	Mathematical development Knowledge and understanding of the world	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle  
The Brow  
35 Trewartha Park  
Weston-Super-Mare  
North Somerset  
BS23 2RT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>23</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Plymbridge Nursery School is situated on the outskirts of Plymouth. It opened in 1981 as a 26-place nursery and has been gradually extended to accommodate the full-time equivalent of 62 children. There are two full-time teachers, one of whom is the headteacher. There is also a part-time teacher and the rest of the staff consist of nursery nurses and support assistants. Most children live in the surrounding area, which comprises of a mixture of private, local authority housing, and hospital accommodation. However, a significant number of children with special educational needs are brought in from across the city by school transport. Many of the children who attend the nursery are from single or separated parents who are supported by state benefits. A significant number are also from low-income homes where two parents are working on separate shifts. All children are of white UK heritage. The school admits the children at three and most have four full terms of nursery education. The children work within small group sessions for focused activities but follow individual choices for a large part of their time in nursery. Almost half of the children have special educational needs and these include difficulties with speech, social development and physical disabilities. Overall, attainment on entry is below average with a significant number of children experiencing poor speech, immature social skills and a variety of different learning difficulties. The nursery has not identified any gifted or talented children.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This school ensures that all children, including those with special educational needs, are made to feel valued. The headteacher has particular expertise with children who are experiencing learning and behaviour difficulties and she works closely with her staff to provide a caring environment. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. The children start school with standards that are below national expectations in all areas of learning, particularly in communication, language and literacy development and personal and social skills, which are all poor. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress but standards are still below national expectations when they leave the nursery. This is because most children attend nursery only on a part-time basis and this, added to their poor starting point, limits the amount of progress made in all areas of learning during their time in the nursery. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Provision for children with special educational needs is very good and is carefully monitored by the headteacher.
- Links with parents are very good and they have very positive views of the nursery.
- The headteacher has clear educational direction and all staff work well with her as a team. Good use is made of specific grants and finances are organised well.
- A good range of activities are organised for both parents and toddlers and these support well the work of the nursery.
- Links with the local community are good.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in all areas of the Foundation Stage are below national expectations when the children leave the nursery.
- Assessments are not used sufficiently well to inform curricular planning.
- Teachers and nursery support staff do not always have high enough expectations of

behaviour and this results in incidents of aggressive behaviour amongst the children.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The nursery has made appropriate progress since the last inspection and most of the key issues have been satisfactorily dealt with. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The provision for cultural development has improved. Staff are suitably managed and deployed throughout the school day and the children are appropriately supervised. A long-term development plan has been formulated and is well matched to the needs of the nursery. The prospectus meets statutory requirements but the governors' report to parents does not comply. Due to staff absences, formal methods of monitoring are still yet to be implemented but planned procedures for this have been documented. Although short-term planning identifies learning intentions, it does not yet fully record what the children are expected to learn.

## **STANDARDS**

The vast majority of children start nursery at the age of three with levels of attainment that are below national expectations in all areas of learning of the Foundation Stage. These areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Standards are particularly poor in speaking and listening skills. Satisfactory progress is made in the nursery but by the time the children are ready to leave the nursery they are still working within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Foundation Stage. This is because most children attend nursery only on a part-time basis and so the poor levels of speech limit the amount of progress made in all areas of learning.

## **CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Children enjoy coming to the nursery and get involved in activities quickly. However, there are a significant minority of immature children who are unable to sustain concentration for any length of time and become restless.
Behaviour	Satisfactory. Most children behave well but few are courteous and not all children show respect for nursery property. A small number of children are undisciplined and have difficulty carrying on with their routines, even for short periods of time, without adult intervention.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Relationships with adults are encouraging and helpful and children are conscientious about taking attendance registers to the office and carrying messages. They make choices in activities and many make appropriate gains in their ability to concentrate and persevere.
Attendance	Good. Children make good use of their nursery place and attend regularly.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	
21 sessions seen overall	Satisfactory

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all areas of learning. During the inspection, 21 sessions or part sessions were observed of which 43 per cent were good and 57 per cent satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed; this is an improvement since the last inspection when 17 per cent were unsatisfactory. Particular strengths of teaching are the use of both staff skills and resources; all adults are deployed well and this has a good impact on the quality of learning. The use of homework is also used well to promote the children's interest, concentration and independence in their learning. Both teachers and nursery nurses have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the needs of these young children and teach basic skills appropriately. Planning is structured and appropriate use is made of both teachers and support staff use a variety of different teaching methods with individuals or groups. All adults share in the children's successes and praise them accordingly. However, teachers and nursery nurses do not always have sufficiently high enough expectations of either children's learning or behaviour. This has a negative impact on the productivity and pace of learning. The quality of teaching for children with special educational needs is good and good relationships help them succeed.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum covers the required areas of learning and includes a broad range of activities that are relevant to the children's needs.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Very good. The school has good systems for identifying needs early and all staff are aware of these. Where appropriate individual education plans are drawn up, which are reviewed regularly and shared with parents.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Children are given opportunities to reflect and play well individually. They are encouraged to play together but there is insufficient emphasis made on the difference between right and wrong. They have satisfactory experiences of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its children	Satisfactory. Staff know the children well and respond to their individual needs. There is appropriate provision for health, safety and hygiene. However, management of behaviour is not always consistent, risk assessments are vague and staff are yet to have child protection training. Use of assessment to inform planning is also unsatisfactory.

The school works very well with parents and carers. There are very effective links with them and they are encouraged to take a full part in nursery life.





## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher knows exactly in which direction to lead the nursery and firmly adheres to this route. She shares with her staff a common sense of purpose and all work well together to ensure the learning experiences are enjoyable for staff, children and parents alike.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and kept well informed by the headteacher. The statutory responsibilities are fulfilled in the prospectus but not in the annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The nursery has recently introduced a baseline assessment and has started to work with local primary schools to monitor standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Funding from a variety of different sources is used well to enrich opportunities of both the children and their parents. Both the headteacher and governors are aware of the principles of best value.

The school has a barely satisfactory number of teaching staff but there are a good number of support staff. Accommodation is satisfactory and both indoor and outdoor areas are spacious. However, there is no confidential area to take parents and there is no staffroom. Some areas of the nursery are cluttered and untidy. Resources are satisfactory overall but many are tired looking and many books need replacing.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like going to the nursery.</li> <li>• They feel that their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the nursery with questions or problems.</li> <li>• They feel that the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The right amount of homework is given.</li> <li>• They feel well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• They are happy with the relationships between home and school.</li> <li>• The nursery is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The behaviour in school.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> <li>• The nursery ensuring that their children work hard and achieve their best.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the vast majority of the positive views expressed by the parents and acknowledge the good links between home and nursery, the eagerness of the children and the strength of the headteacher's leadership. However, they cannot agree the nursery consistently helps children to become mature and responsible and find teaching to be

broadly satisfactory. Inspectors are also unable to agree with the negative view about the provision of interesting activities outside of lessons. They do confirm that a significant number of children misbehave in the nursery and agree that not all children are adequately challenged.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Children start nursery at the age of three with standards of attainment that are below national expectations in all areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum. These areas of learning are personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or *stepping stones*, from which both progress and standards be measured.
2. Standards in speaking and listening skills are poor and approximately half of the children have special educational needs. All children make satisfactory progress within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs, but a significant number will not reach satisfactory levels by the start of Year 1 of the National Curriculum. This represents a decline in standards since the previous report but can actually be explained by the significant changes in the intake of the nursery and the severity of the problems encountered by the children.
3. By the time that the children are ready to leave the nursery at four and a half, they have made satisfactory progress in personal, social and emotional development but are still within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are happy to part with their parent or carer but many lack the enthusiasm and curiosity associated with young children. Most of their play is on an individual basis where they play in solitude. However, it is clear that they quickly start to feel secure in the nursery environment and react well to regular routines, such as snack times. Many of the children are at a very early stage of understanding and their poor speech has a negative impact on their emotional development. This is because they have difficulty communicating their feelings and results in outbreaks of squabbling and poor behaviour.
4. The vast majority of children start nursery with poorly developed skills in both speaking and listening, which are well below nationally expected levels for the age of three. All children, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress but only a very small number of children are on line to meet the recommended levels in the Early Learning Goals of communication, language and literacy by the time that they start Year 1 of the National Curriculum. The vast majority of children are working within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is because of the delay in the development of their speech and the severity of the learning difficulties they have. Children enjoy listening to stories for very short periods of time and clearly identify the main character in a story. They recognise their own name and most of the children make marks on paper to communicate. However, only a very small number of children link initial sounds using a commercially produced programme and identify words associated with the activities they can choose from.
5. Children enter the nursery with below average standards in mathematical development and although all children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, they are still working within the first stage or

*stepping stone* of the Foundation Stage curriculum by the time that they leave the nursery. They sing number songs and are able to share sweets equally when helped by an adult. They use large wooden blocks and construction kits to create shapes and a very small number of children recognise circles. However, they lack the developmental skills and vocabulary to investigate mathematical problems and solve simple problems.

6. Children enter the nursery with a limited basic knowledge of the world around them and lack the curiosity to investigate it further. All make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs, but are still working within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Foundation Stage curriculum by the time that they leave the nursery. They show an interest in newly hatched ducklings, minibeasts searches and enjoy exploring sand and water. However, attention spans are frequently limited and many of the children tend to move quickly away from one activity to another, unless monitored by an adult.
7. Children start nursery with standards of attainment in physical development that are below national expectations. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress but the majority are still working within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Foundation Stage curriculum as they leave nursery. The children move around the nursery confidently and follow a simple pathway in the outdoor area. They use tricycles and scooters with varying degrees of confidence but are unable to stop and park up these vehicles. A very small number of children are developing their ability to respond to music and make appropriate progress when singing action songs. One or two children are able to climb steps but do not use alternate feet to achieve this. Children show an awareness of the need to eat and decide independently when they wish to have their snack. However, lower achievers have little understanding of their personal needs.
8. Children start nursery with standards in creative development, which are below that expected at the age of three. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress but are still working within the first stage or *stepping stones* of the Early Learning Goals as they leave nursery. This is because the speaking and listening skills of the children are so poorly developed and they lack the knowledge and skills to express themselves creatively in situations such as role play and singing. Children are able to name basic colours, enthusiastically make patterns in paint and create prints using a variety of different shapes. They use recycled materials and a wide variety of fixing materials to create three-dimensional structures. Children join in their favourite songs and nursery rhymes and one or two are able to join in confidently with the appropriate actions. They are starting to be interested in modelling the behaviour of adults and a small number of children are beginning to show an interest in music making.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Children's attitudes to the nursery are satisfactory. They enjoy coming and most leave their parents and carers happily. They get involved in activities quickly and this makes a positive contribution to their learning. Many of them particularly enjoy playing outside in the fine weather when they play in the sand, on the tricycles, or use the climbing frame. When the quality of teaching is good they respond to lessons positively. For example, in story time they listen well to *Mrs Honey's Hat* and concentration is good. This is because the reading is animated and captures their interest. They are quickly involved in the story because the teacher's guidance

ensures they look at the pictures carefully and absorb what they are seeing. In another story time, listening to *Mr Gumpy's Outings* they became immediately interested in what is going on because the clever use of resources which depicted a boat on the river made them keen to hear what happened next. When teachers guide the children in a patient and encouraging manner, a few will speak confidently in groups; for example, they tell each other what they like about their library books. They are also able to share computer equipment.

10. However, a significant minority of children are unable to sustain concentration for any length of time because of their immaturity or learning difficulties. This results in a loss of interest during group sessions when they become restless or uncooperative. For example, when asked to sing a song at the end of the morning one or two children in a group were openly defiant, refused to do so and the learning was disrupted for everyone.
11. Most children behave well during activities and whilst taking part in group sessions around the nursery. For example, they play happily on climbing equipment or behave well when painting. However, there are some occurrences of unsatisfactory behaviour. Very few are courteous and hardly ever say please or thank you when asking for their drink or fruit at snack time. A small minority of children show little respect for each other or school property. This was evident when children were observed just dropping their tricycles and scooters when they had finished using them. One or two lack self-discipline and are unable to carry on with their routines, even for short periods without adult intervention. For example, a few were observed climbing on tables or throwing things at other children and this inevitably lead to some of them being hurt.
12. Personal development is satisfactory for the vast majority of children. Teachers' relationships with the children are encouraging and helpful. Children are conscientious about taking attendance registers to the office and carrying messages between adults. They make choices of activities and many are making appropriate gains in their ability to concentrate and persevere with adult help. Children do accept the full participation of those with special educational needs and friendly chat during activities supports learning. However, there are often missed opportunities during play to focus clearly on personal development. For example, play in the sand pit rarely develops children's understanding of mathematical concepts such as *full* or *empty* in relation to their plastic buckets.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

13. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. During the inspection, 21 sessions or part sessions were observed and 43 per cent were good and 57 per cent satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed; this is an improvement since the last inspection when 17 per cent were unsatisfactory.
14. One of the strengths of the quality of teaching is the way in which support staff and resources are used. All adults involved in the nursery are deployed well and this has a positive impact on the quality of learning. For example, most areas of the nursery are well supervised and this ensures that the vast majority of children are supported during the different sessions. It also enables children to experience the suitably organised small groups for stories and structured teaching sessions that are planned.

15. All staff involved in the nursery have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. They understand that learning through play is important and appropriate opportunities are provided for this to happen. Basic skills are taught satisfactorily; for example, number rhymes such as *Ten in the Bed* are used successfully to promote numeracy skills. Good use is made of interesting story books to develop literacy skills and information and communication technology is taught appropriately through a range of child-centred programs.
16. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and activities appropriately structured. Instructions are communicated effectively to all adults working in the areas of learning and introductions are clear and concise. However, although learning intentions are stated in the planning sheets, they are not sufficiently specific enough and objectives not clearly identified. The overall quality of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory and all staff share the enjoyment of children's successes, showing delight at their achievements. They use ongoing assessments as part of their normal daily work. However, the knowledge gained from these assessments is not always used to inform the next steps of planning.
17. The quality of teaching for children with special educational needs is good and all staff play a significant role in the progress that these children make. They have appropriate expectations and good relationships that help these children to try to succeed. Special educational needs assistants give high quality support and make a positive contribution to the development of these children. A range of strategies are included to ensure that the children are able to participate fully in all activities including outdoor activities and imaginative play. The co-ordinator carefully matches their needs to their individual education plans and progress against these are reviewed regularly and shared with parents.
18. Homework is used well to promote the knowledge and skills of the children. Children are encouraged to take library books home, activity packs and focused tasks, which are shared well with parents and carers.
19. However, teachers and nursery staff do not always have sufficiently high expectations of both learning and behaviour. The children are not consistently prompted to help them explain their thoughts and ideas and, as a result, not all children take an active part in the work. Adult intervention is not always sufficiently adequate enough and, during the inspection, missed opportunities for reinforcing teaching points and consolidating learning were observed. For example, children were observed practising their throwing skills. Although the nursery support assistant involved was very encouraging, little guidance was given as to how the children might improve their skills and when they were left alone both the quality of learning and behaviour of the children deteriorated. Teachers and nursery support staff do not have high enough expectations for behaviour and management of the children is weak at times. This results in a significant number of children misbehaving and being impolite. For example, during a story session children called out and interrupted a story but no attempt was made to make them put up their hand to gain attention. Behaviour management systems are not always consistently applied and this results in incidents of squabbling, quarrelling and fighting.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

20. The school plans a satisfactory curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. It covers the required areas of learning and includes a broad range of interesting, stimulating activities that are relevant to children's needs. The good links with the community and the role of parents within the school contributes to the richness of the experiences the children receive. From the previous inspection there were issues associated with the curriculum. These included the need to develop a planning system that met more closely the needs of children, together with a revised recording and assessment system. Progress is being made with the recording and assessment of children's achievements. However, planning to clearly state what children are to learn in the curriculum has not yet been sufficiently fully developed and insufficient use is made of the stages of the Foundation Stage or *stepping stones* to guide what children should do next to improve their learning. Policies have been written for most areas of learning but many are now out of date and need rewriting.
21. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities offered to the children are satisfactory. The breadth, balance and relevance of the whole curriculum meet recommended requirements. Useful links are made between different areas of learning. For example, at the time of the inspection the main emphasis was on mathematics but all other areas were included where appropriate. For instance, this was evident when at the end of each session the children sang songs and repeated rhymes that include numerical language. In addition, during a painting activity children used pots and boxes to print a car with two wheels.
22. Children with special educational needs receive very good support and they make satisfactory progress. The school has a good system for identifying needs at an early stage and staff are aware of the comprehensive procedures. Where appropriate individual education plans are drawn up and these plans are reviewed regularly and parents are fully involved. The school offers ten places to pupils with identified special educational needs and this facility is highly valued by both the parents and the local authority.
23. The community makes a good contribution to children's learning. Parents are involved with children's learning for example through the work that children take home after each session. Outside agencies, such as the police and the fire service, come in to school to help children have first-hand experiences of these services and the people who work in them and photographic records show children enjoying talking to firemen as well as sitting happily in the cab of the engine. The provision for extra-curricular activities to enhance children's learning is good. Children make visits to places of interest such as the zoo. The nursery also sets up opportunities in the outdoor area; for example, the school set up a 'beach' in the outside play area, which provided a wide range of opportunities that included the exploration of sand castles with both dry and damp sand. Children also regularly visit a nearby supermarket where they are encouraged to participate in shopping experiences.
24. The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for children's spiritual development is satisfactory and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The outside environment is a place where children are able to reflect on various issues. For example, a photograph shows children sitting and thinking under the trees as they explore the use of pencils and paper to create emergent writing. During the inspection, a group of children were observed squeezing a chiffon scarf in their hands. They expressed a loud 'Wow' when they opened them and saw the scarf spring up and expand.



25. Provision for children's moral development is satisfactory. Children play well in pairs and groups. However, although aspects of right and wrong are taught at times, there is insufficient emphasis on children being made aware of the effect of their actions upon others. For example, play is often boisterous and a small minority show little care to towards materials and equipment.
26. Provision for children's social development is satisfactory. They are encouraged to work with one another and most play well together. Some sharing of equipment and materials does take place, particularly outside and when at the computers. However, listening skills are not well developed and they do not readily listen to one another. Unless promoted by adults, children do not naturally use the courtesies of please and thank you.
27. Provision for children's cultural development is satisfactory. They experiences aspects of other cultures through cooking. For example, they have looked and experienced Indian, Chinese and Italian cooking. Festivals and events such as Christmas, Easter and birthdays are celebrated. Good photographic records show children's participation in visits to nearby areas that promote their own cultural heritage.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

28. Staff know the children well and are therefore able to respond appropriately to their individual needs. This was demonstrated particularly well at the start of an observed session. A child who was reluctant to part from his parent was made a fuss of and became rapidly involved in a favourite activity, which helped him to settle. Although not a legal requirement, attendance is recorded and monitored. This ensures that health and safety requirements are met and good routines are established. Assessments are carried out regularly to ensure that those with special educational needs are given the extra support they need and provision for these children is a strength of the school. There is good liaison with support agencies who speak highly of the school's willingness to work with them in the best interests of the children. Parents are very positive about the attitudes and values promoted by the school. They are particularly happy about how approachable the staff are and say that teachers and staff react quickly to parents' worries and concerns.
29. There is appropriate provision for teaching children about the importance of health, hygiene and safety. Staff make sure that children wear a hat while playing outside on sunny days, that they do not sit in the hot sun too long and encourage them to wash their hands before eating food. Lunch is served with a high regard for social development. Resources are all easily accessible and furniture is of the right size. However, there is not a sufficient regard for children's safety. For instance, during the inspection a small group was left unsupervised for a short time while working with scissors and this created a potentially dangerous situation. The issue of leaving children unsupervised was criticised at the last inspection and this has not been resolved. Risk assessment procedures are vague and this is unsatisfactory. County guidelines are followed in matters of child protection and, while staff are vigilant, they have not all had the required training. The management of behaviour is not consistent. There is no whole-school structure for dealing with incidents of disruption and this results in too much inconsistency in the way they are dealt with. This represents a decline since the last inspection when effective measures were in place.

30. Staff work hard at ensuring that the children are assessed regularly. They observe children at work and play and keep appropriate records. The headteacher compiles a detailed overview of all of the children and uses this information to help set priorities for curriculum development. However, these procedures still need further refining and improving to relate them more closely to the recommended stages or *stepping stones* in the areas of learning of the Foundation Stage. Use of assessment to inform planning is unsatisfactory because the information gathered is not being used rigorously to clearly focus day-to-day activities on what children need to do in their next stage of learning. A comprehensive assessment is carried out before transfer to the next stage of their education at the local primary schools and a copy of this report is given to parents.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

31. The positive partnership with parents and carers is a real strength of the school and their views about the nursery are very good. All of the many parents who answered the inspection questionnaire feel that their child likes school and that the teaching is helping them to make progress. They are happy with the standards their children are achieving and are particularly pleased that they are encouraged to take books home on a regular basis. They say their children enjoy working on their homework activities and they find these number activities fun and interesting. Parents know there are some children with special educational needs and are pleased with the way they are all encouraged to mix and play together.
32. Good systems are in place to introduce children to the nursery and includes home visits. This enables teachers to know the children and their families in their own environment. Visits to the nursery in the also allow parents and children to familiarise themselves with basic arrangements. A flexible start also ensures that they can settle at their own pace. Good links with the family centre based in the *Bungalow* ensures that families who take part in the *Welcome to Nursery* toddler sessions are already familiar with some of the staff and this eases transition.
33. Parents receive regular information about organisational matters and social activities. The prospectus now contains all of the required information. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection but the governors' annual report is missing some required information; this includes a statement on school security, any action taken relating to the last inspection and a report of any matters dealt with since the previous annual general report to parents. No topic information was given to parents this term due to staff shortages. The home-school link book is used particularly well to communicate with parents of children who are brought to school by taxi.
34. Parents are very welcome in school. They feel that teachers are friendly and always happy to discuss worries or concerns on an informal basis. Formal meetings are held in their child's first and last term, and they are given a written report when they transfer to primary school. There is no formal parent-teacher association, but the parent committee of the *Bungalow* work very hard to organise fund-raising activities such as the summer fun day and Christmas fayre. They also provide a forum for parents and staff to exchange ideas about the nursery. There is good help for working parents through the provision of *wrap around care* provision that includes a breakfast, lunch and child care club. Parents help regularly in the nursery with activities such as reading and organise snacks at every session. They appreciate being encouraged to bring their own toddlers in with them and the

regular invitations to the annual family barbecue, sports day, tea party and leavers' celebration are well received.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

35. The headteacher knows exactly in which direction the nursery is to follow and firmly adheres to this route. She shares with her staff a common sense of purpose and all work well together to ensure that the learning experiences are enriching and enjoyable for staff, children and parents alike. The development of children is always put first and this approach reflects the aims of the nursery, which focuses on the needs of the whole child.
36. The headteacher is well supported by one part-time experienced teacher, a full-time teacher who is newly qualified and a team of dedicated nursery nurses and support staff. During the past few terms there have been a number of staff absences and the nursery has coped admirably with the situation. The headteacher regularly reviews the work of all staff on an informal basis as she works alongside her colleagues. Plans to introduce a more formal structure of monitoring both teaching and learning have been identified in the school development plan and this will be linked to performance management. Opportunities for them to develop and share expertise are closely aligned to the priorities in the school development plan. They have established secure and effective working relationships with each other and with parents and carers. In addition, very good working relationships have been established with outside agencies in order to fully meet the needs of all children in the school.
37. The headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator and she manages the provision for the children on the register very well. The staff who support these children work very well as a team and there are very effective and supportive links with the various agencies involved with children attending the nursery.
38. Parents speak very highly of the support they and their children receive. Visiting support staff are complimentary of the welcome they receive and the quality of the provision available to all the children.
39. Governors are very supportive of the school and those who are able to regularly visit the school. Recruitment is a problem but those who are involved are well informed about the work of the school and are aware of plans for the future. However, the governing body play a limited part in determining how the school is to develop and relies too heavily on the guidance of the headteacher.
40. The school development plan is appropriately focused on areas that require improvement. The issues from the last inspection have been satisfactorily addressed and the nursery is appropriately placed to move on further. The management of the school's finances is satisfactory and both the headteacher and governing body are aware of the principles of best value. Funding from specific grants is used well to enrich the learning opportunities of both the children and their parents. For example, good use was made of a specific grant to refurbish a bungalow on site and turn it into a family centre. The day-to-day running of the school is well organised by the newly appointed secretary who is both welcoming to parents and efficient in her duties.

41. The newly qualified teacher has taken on a number of roles since appointed but does feel well supported by the headteacher who is her mentor. She is given appropriate opportunities to visit other nurseries and attend courses to meet other teachers. The nursery welcomes student teachers on placement and during the inspection they were fully involved in its life. However, there are no handbooks or guidelines prepared for them and appropriate support is not always available to them.
42. The school has a barely satisfactory number of teaching staff, but they are well deployed. All staff who work in the nursery are appropriately qualified to teach nursery-age children and work in an effective partnership to provide an appropriate education for all children. The accommodation is satisfactory; there is a large outdoor play area and activity areas indoors are spacious. However, the headteacher has no confidential area to take parents, carers or visitors from outside agencies and there is no staff room. Storage space is limited and, although this does not directly impinge on the quality of the children's learning, it has a negative impact on the appearance of the nursery, which looks cluttered and untidy in some areas. The accommodation lacks stimulating displays and interactive experiences. Overall, resources are satisfactory but many look tired and uninspiring. For example, the picture books in the group areas have been very well used but many now need to be replaced.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

43. The headteacher, staff and governors should:
- a) Improve standards in all areas of learning by:
    - planning clear learning objectives for each session;  
(Paragraph 16)
    - implementing a programme that will focus on the speaking and listening skills of the children.  
(Paragraph 1, 47)
  - b) Eliminate the anti-social behaviour and improve the attitudes of a significant minority of children by:
    - ensuring that all staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour and are all following the same management strategy;  
(Paragraph 19)
    - intervening quickly to defuse aggressive situations;  
(Paragraph 19, 59)
    - implement activities that will increase the children's awareness of their actions on others.  
(Paragraph 45)
  - c) Use their assessment procedures to inform curriculum planning by:
    - ensuring that the learning objectives set are used as a tool for assessment.  
(Paragraph 30)

In addition to the key issues above the following should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- implement support procedures to enable student teachers on placement to be fully informed and involved in the life of the nursery;  
(Paragraph 41)
- ensure that governors fully fulfil their statutory requirements and complete the annual report to parents;  
(Paragraph 33)
- implement regular risk assessments and ensure that staff are trained appropriately for child protection issues;  
(Paragraph 29)
- plan a systematic programme to renew the resources that have become old.  
(Paragraph 42)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of sessions observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	43	57	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	61
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	32

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	n/a
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	n/a

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	n/a

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	n/a

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

## **Teachers and classes**

### **Qualified teachers and support staff**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.2

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	220

Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.5 : 1
--------------------------------	---------

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	180,130
Total expenditure	172,766
Expenditure per pupil	1,393
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,781
Balance carried forward to next year	9,145

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	93
Number of questionnaires returned	41

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	37	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	54	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	34	0	2	2
The teaching is good.	68	29	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	44	5	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	12	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	51	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	61	32	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	29	0	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	32	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	37	2	0	7



## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

44. Most children start nursery with poorly developed personal and social skills. For example, a small number of children with special educational needs have not been toilet trained and others have very poor social skills. All children make appropriate progress within the first stage of the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs, but a significant number will not reach satisfactory levels by the start of Year 1 of the National Curriculum because both their emotional development and speaking and listening skills are so poorly developed on entry into the nursery. In the previous report no judgement was made on attainment of personal, social and emotional development so no comparison of standards can be made.
45. The vast majority of children leave their parents or carers happily as they enter the nursery and this is mainly because the staff are accessible and welcoming at the start of each session. However, most children start the nursery with low levels of curiosity and are indifferent about approaching new experiences. They are given appropriate opportunities to choose their own activities and this promotes their interest in learning. For example, many children enjoy playing in the outdoor area where they can explore the various activities in their own time and in solitude. They quickly start to feel secure in the nursery environment and react well to regular routines, such as snack times. Many of the children are at a very early stage of understanding and accepting the needs of others and at times frequent squabbles break out. For example, the children are just starting to learn how to share equipment and are not always sensitive to the efforts of others. They have little respect for the structures built with big bricks by their peers but show developing perseverance skills when they are making their own creations. They successfully take on small amounts of responsibility such as returning mugs and taking registers to the office. However, many of the children are loathed to clear up after activities and need reminding of their responsibilities. Appropriate progress is made in personal hygiene and table manners. Children particularly enjoy chatting to adults both at snack time and during lunchtimes and this has a good impact on their social development. Conversations between the children are still at an early stage of development and this is because of the poor levels of speech and this can result in difficulties. Poor communication skills also have an impact on the emotional development of the children who find it difficult to communicate their feelings and thus resort to screaming, crying and inappropriate face gestures.
46. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of development is satisfactory. No judgement on teaching was made in the previous report and, therefore, no comparisons can be made. All staff know the children well and this has a positive impact on their personal development. There is no policy or scheme of work for this area of learning and teaching tends to be incidental rather than through planned, focused sessions. However, books, toys and other resources are carefully chosen to ensure that children are not restricted by cultural or gender bias.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

47. The vast majority of children start nursery with poorly developed skills in both speaking and listening, which are well below nationally expected levels for age three. All children, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress but only a very small number of children are on line to meet the recommended levels in the Early Learning Goals of communication, language and literacy by the time that they start Year 1 of the National Curriculum. This is because of the delay in development in many of the children and the severity of the difficulties they have. At the time of the last inspection children's attainment in most aspects of language and literacy were considered to be on course to meet the required level by the age of five. However, because of the significant number of children with special educational needs who are now admitted into the nursery, this has had a significant impact on the attainment of the children as they leave the nursery and it is not possible to make a direct comparison with the previous report.
48. By the time that the majority of children leave the nursery at four and a half, they are working within the first stage of the Foundation Stage. They use words and gestures to communicate their feelings but little speech takes place between groups of children. For example, during a printing activity with different shaped leaves and a variety of paints, the children were observed responding enthusiastically to this activity; their obvious joy was clearly evident through facial expressions and gleeful noises. Most children enjoy listening to stories and lower achieving children respond particularly well to the use of resources to support the story telling. For instance, the reading of *Mr Gumpy's Outing* was very well promoted through the use of a boat and both small characters and animals appropriate to illustrate the story. The vast majority of children recognise number songs and rhymes, such as *Ten in the Bed* and *Humpty Dumpty*. However, it is only a small number of children who are able to join in repeated phrases used in stories, effectively remember details in songs and rhymes and listen to each other in discussion.
49. Most children recognise their name written on a card. A small number of children identify words in a folder that are linked with the activities that they can plan to undertake in free choice sessions. They also able to copy write these words into their planning books. Several children have started to understand how marks on paper are used to communicate with. All children, including those with special educational needs, are able to draw and paint and are developing their hand and eye co-ordination appropriately through a range of activities such as rolling soft materials and pouring liquids from one container to another. However, only one or two children give meaning to their marks, such as on badges, lists and small notebooks, which have been made for them. They also show particular interest in book illustrations and print around them, such as on the computer screen. A very small number of these children are able to handle books carefully and recognise one or two familiar words such as *taxi*. Their responses indicate that they are starting to work within the second stage of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and this has been maintained since the last inspection. Good use of made a wide variety of resources, which are used to promote the children's learning. Stories are well chosen and are used well to develop a wide range of knowledge and skills. In one story session *Mrs Honey's Hat* was used to discuss the sequence of the days of the week and the children were clearly starting to understand that *Monday* followed *Tuesday* and then it was *Wednesday*. Stories are also used to develop literacy and numeracy skills. This was observed when the story *I don't want to go to bed* was read aloud to a group of children. Pictures were discussed to develop vocabulary

but were also used to promote counting skills when both the owl eyes and the number of fish swimming were counted. In good story sessions adults use successful questioning skills and these are used well to develop the children's vocabulary. For example, in one story session the teacher explained the meaning of several new words such as *squabble*. However, not all story sessions move at an appropriate pace and this results in the children losing interest in the activity and becoming restless. At times the focus is not sufficiently specific and interruptions from other adults and children have a negative impact on group management. This results in disinterested children who are restless and behaviour management becomes a problem for staff. Staff do not always maximise opportunities to develop the speaking skills of the children. For example, a group of children were observed working on the computers; very little dialogue took place and the adult did not identify any teaching of response skills with this activity.

51. The policy for this area of learning requires updating to enable it to be brought in line with the most recent produced guidelines of the Foundation Stage. All staff are satisfactorily involved in the planning for this area of learning and meet weekly to review the focused areas. Good use is made of the available resources but many of the books are tired looking and need replacing. Children are encouraged to take library books home to share and this has a very positive impact on their learning.

### **Mathematical development**

52. Children enter the nursery with below average attainment and although all children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in this area of learning they are still working within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Foundation Stage curriculum by the time they leave the nursery and this is below national expectations.
53. Children are able to sing number songs and rhymes during group time and this appropriately develops their mathematical vocabulary. For example, the number songs *Ten in the Bed* and *1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Once I caught a Fish Alive* were sung appropriately by most children although only a small number knew all the words. During a registration time, one child was observed confidently counting correctly all 14 children in the group. Children use construction kits and large-scale wooden building blocks for building shapes. One child knew that a tower was taller than it was wide and another arranged a wooden toy train track into a circle. Children also match numbers using computer programs and it is evident that there is a wide range of abilities within the nursery. For example, a small number of children are able to match numbers over five as well as finding one or more or less. However, others experience problems matching numbers up to five and are less successful with these computer programs. Children's speaking skills are not well developed and many have difficulty in explaining what they are doing. Coupled with their short range of concentration span they tend to stop persevering with their activities when difficulties are encountered unless an adult is present.
54. Children show interest in their activities, even if it is only for a short time. However, there is a tendency for them to rush off and try something else particularly if they encounter difficulties. Children with special educational needs are well supported and they make satisfactory progress.
55. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory. Teachers and support staff have a good rapport with the children and this has a positive impact on the

quality of learning. Activities are satisfactorily planned and relate to what the children are going to do. Emphasis on a particular area of learning is planned each term and, during the inspection, the focus was on mathematics. Whilst specific mathematical activities took place, such as the sharing of sweets, which included counting them out, adding and taking away, other areas included number in activities where it was appropriate. For example, when following up the story of *The Rescue Party*, skilful questioning by the teacher encouraged children to remember how many rabbits were involved and how many did not fall down the dry well. However, there is a lack of clear intentions relating to what the children are going to learn in the activity and this impedes both the learning and assessment process. Teachers are skilful in their questioning techniques but this lack of clear learning focus inhibits the questions asked. At present there is insufficient link in either the planning or the assessment procedures to the stages or *stepping-stones* in the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

56. The policy for this area of learning requires updating to enable it to be brought in line with the most recent produced guidelines of the Foundation Stage. All staff are satisfactorily involved in the planning of this area of learning and meet weekly to review them. Good use is made of the available resources and these are satisfactory. Children are encouraged to take mathematical activity sheets home and this has a very positive impact on their learning.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

57. Children enter the nursery with a limited basic knowledge of themselves and the world around them. Whilst in the nursery all children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. However, their overall knowledge in this area of learning is still within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage by the time they leave the nursery and this is below what is expected of them nationally.
58. Children are interested in living things and photographic evidence shows that they are fascinated by newly hatched ducks and minibeasts. They are able to use construction kits of various types to make towers, buildings and structures to ride on. Whilst children's curiosity is sound their language skills are such that it impedes most children explaining what they do. For example, one child was quite clear that a tower was tall but could not express it in words. Children play confidently with water, sand and dough; they show sound manipulative skills in making sand castles and pouring water over water wheels. Children are confident in using computers and apply satisfactory mouse skills. Under instruction a child was able to log-on using his name to open a program. Some are able to change the programs when one has been completed. During the observation it was noticed that many children preferred programs such as *Bob the Builder*, with which they are familiar, rather than the number program that had been set up for them.
59. Children show enjoyment in the activities provided for them and generally they work well alone in pairs or small groups. Their attention span is short and some of the more immature children tend to move quickly from one activity to another unless monitored by an adult. They behave satisfactorily although some of their play is quite boisterous and they are not aware of the consequences of their action upon others. Children do not use please and thank you when they handle equipment and little respect is shown for them. For example, children were observed kicking

construction resources to dismantle a structure they had made and when putting away at the end of the session the pieces were just thrown into the box.

60. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers and other adults within the nursery have a good rapport with the children and they know the children well. They support the children satisfactorily, particularly those with special educational needs. A wide variety of materials are available for children to make things. In a group of children making rockets some are able to use scissors to cut sticky tape although most have difficulty using scissors correctly. One child in the group successfully fixed tubes and plastic pots together with sticky tape after attempting to use glue without success. Sessions are planned using the appropriate national guidelines. However, planning tends to concentrate more on what the children will 'do' rather than the skills they will learn within the activity. This approach makes the assessment of children's achievements more difficult.
61. The policy for this area of learning has been recently reviewed and now reflects the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage. There is no specific co-ordinator for this area of learning but all staff plan activities regularly together. Resources are satisfactory; the outside area provides a wide variety of opportunities for children to learn about their world. At the last inspection this area was only in the planning stage but it is now complete and used well. There are trees, shrubs, and grassed areas, which are used for minibeasts searches, as well as large sandpit.

### **Physical development**

62. Children start nursery with standards of attainment in physical development that are below national expectations. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress but the majority are still working within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Foundation Stage curriculum as they leave nursery. At the time of the last inspection children's attainment in physical development was considered to be on course to meet the required level by the age of five. However, because of the significant number of children with special educational needs who are now admitted into the nursery, this has had a significant impact on the attainment of the children as they leave the nursery and it is not possible to make a direct comparison with the previous report.
63. Children move spontaneously both indoors and in the outdoor area and move appropriately when they are provided with a range of stimuli such as music. They manage body movements such as pedalling tricycles or travelling on scooters but are unable to stop these vehicles with any control or care for their peers. The majority of children are able to follow the outdoor pathway but are unable to turn their tricycles around. One or two climb steps on soft play equipment, crawl over a surface and slide down and then repeat the activity. However, they do not use alternate feet to climb the steps when using this soft equipment or the climbing frame. Children show an awareness of the need to eat and decide independently when they wish to have their snack. However, those children who are still very immature have little understanding of their personal needs. For example, a child was happy to wander around the outdoor area with only one shoe and sock on. He was unable to locate his other shoe when asked and required adult intervention to find it. Prams are pushed appropriately around the outdoor area but only one or two are able to slide, scramble and swing on the climbing frame. They try to aim balls into a net and sometimes succeed with this activity. Other children are successfully

able to fill varying sizes of buckets with sand using different types of spades. With adult intervention a small number of children are able to create sandcastles.

64. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and has been maintained since the last inspection. The children have access to a wide range of equipment, which have been well planned by the adults. A number of the staff involved in the outdoor area interact appropriately with the children and became involved in imaginary activities such as selling ice creams. During these interactions with adults the behaviour and attitudes of the children are positive and this has a good impact on their learning. They appear interested, motivated and purposeful in their play. However, at other times, little guidance is given to the children on how to help them improve their physical skills. For example, when the children were observed throwing their balls into the net, no guidance was provided which could enable success to be achieved. There are also missed opportunities when children could be taught how to turn their vehicles around. Progression of skills is not always evident and learning intentions not always sufficiently identified. For instance, although a pathway exists in the outdoor area, it is not developed sufficiently to move on further the higher achievers. Poor behaviour is not always checked by staff outdoors and this results in squabbles and conflict.
65. The policy for physical development is in need of updating in the light of changes within the curriculum for this age group. There is no specific scheme of work for this area of learning but all staff plan together on a regular basis. Resources are satisfactory and good use is made of the outdoor area to for the children to develop their physical skills.

### **Creative development**

66. Children start nursery with standards in creative development, which are below that expected at the age of three. All children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress but are still working within the first stage or *stepping stone* of the Early Learning Goals as they leave nursery. This is because the speaking and listening skills and fine motor skills of the children are so poorly developed and they lack the knowledge and skills to express themselves creatively. At the time of the last inspection children's attainment in creative development was considered to be on course to meet the required level by the age of five in all areas, except music, which was considered to be weak. However, because of the significant number of children with special educational needs who are now admitted into the nursery, this has had a significant impact on the attainment of the children as they leave the nursery and it is not possible to make a direct comparison to the previous report.
67. Children are able to name the basic colours of red, yellow, blue and green. They enthusiastically use their fingers to create patterns in paint and make prints using a variety of different shapes. Children concentrate well for short sessions when they are given opportunities to make three-dimensional structures using recycled materials and a wide variety of fixing materials. For example, they enjoy making rockets out of plastic containers and use them in their creative play. However, although the children use body language to illustrate their feelings, discussion between them is limited. Children join in their favourite songs and nursery rhymes such as *Row, row, row the boat and Ring-a-ring-a-roses*. One or two are able to join in confidently with the appropriate actions. Children are starting to be interested in modelling the behaviour of adults and three girls were observed in role play,

which involved pretending to be members of staff in the nursery. Other groups of children enjoy pretending to sell ice cream when they are in the sandpit area. A small number of children are beginning to show an interest in music making and are enthusiastic about creative experiences. For instance, during the inspection a small group of children concentrated well when they watched a scrunched-up chiffon scarf emerge from a member of staff's hand as if it was flower petals emerging.

68. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of learning is satisfactory and is similar to that observed at the previous inspection. Work covered in this area of learning makes an appropriate contribution to children's spiritual and cultural development. Praise is used effectively to encourage and support the children in their learning and, when staff interact with the children, skilful use is made of questioning to ensure learning. At times, opportunities are planned appropriately to encourage understanding and this was clearly evident when the children were involved creating the flower from the chiffon scarf. However, other activities lack focus and are not sufficiently planned to meet the needs of all the differing abilities and this was evident during the leaf printing session observed.
69. The policy for this area of learning has been recently redrafted and reflects the recommendations of the Foundation Stage. There is no specific scheme of work for creative development but all staff plan together. Resources are satisfactory but the home corner is stark and is not used sufficiently for a range of settings such as a café or shop area. There have been a small number of visits by musicians and dancers and these provide opportunities to enrich the curriculum in this area of learning.